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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PK](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#)

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL REACTION TO THE SOUTH WAZIRISTAN STRIKE

Classified By: Ambassador Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (C) MFA Director General for Americas Sohail Mahmood convoked Polcouns September 11 to express deep concern about today's New York Time's story, which alleged that President Bush had approved U.S. military raids into Pakistan. Asking who was providing this information and what were their motivations, Mahmood said these allegations undermined a new government that needed some space in which to settle down and begin making policy decisions. Mahmood also asked for a copy of the testimony of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Mullen which was quoted in the Pakistani media (see below) today. Mahmood commented that, at a time when Pakistan is moving forward on shared counter-terrorism objectives, these kinds of stories hurt us both. He noted that the stories prompted anti-American debate in the parliament today, especially from Jamaat-e-Islmai Senator Khurshid Ahmad, and that the Pakistani electronic media had "gone wild" with combative and defensive discourse.

¶2. (SBU) On September 11, all local papers provided front-page coverage of a statement released by Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Kayani after he called upon newly-elected President Zardari. The statement says that "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country would be defended at all costs, and no external force is allowed to conduct operations inside Pakistan." The press quotes Kayani as asserting: "The right to conduct operations against militants inside (Pakistan's) territory is solely the responsibility of the respective armed forces" and "There is no question of any agreement or understanding with the coalition forces whereby they are allowed to conduct operations on our side of the border."

¶3. (SBU) Most media highlighted on the same page remarks by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Mullen's remarks September 10 before the House Armed Services Committee. These stories focused on Mullen's stated belief that the U.S. was not now winning in Afghanistan and that a more comprehensive strategy would be needed that would cover both sides of the Pakistan-Afghan border. Many media outlets interpreted Admiral Mullen's comments as giving a green light to continued coalition operations inside Pakistan.

PATTERSON